

Message Text

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63/44

ACTION AID-20

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 DODE-00 SWF-02 SS-20

NSC-07 PM-07 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 EB-11

IGA-02 AGR-20 L-03 COME-00 H-03 DRC-01 /157 W

----- 031687

O R 141550Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE NIACT

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8108

USMISSION USUN NY WCO

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - ADD LONDON AS INFO ADDEE

ROME PLEASE PASS URGENTLY TO AID/W DAA BON BROWN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID NG

SUBJECT: NIGER DROUGHT RELIEF - ROME MEETING

REF: A. NIAMEY 1936; B. NIAMEY 1795 C. ROME 8105 D. NIAMEY 1856

SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES US REPS TO FAO/OSRO
MEETING ROME JUNE 17 WITH BACKGROUND DATA IN SUPPORT OF OUR
RECOMMENDATIONS THAT FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE TRUCKS BE AIRLIFTED ASAP
TO NIGER FOR FOOD DISTRIBUTION TO REMOTE AREAS. END SUMMARY

1. FOLLOWING POINTS MAY BE USEFUL TO US REPS AS THEY PREPARE

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FOR JUNE 17 MEETING IN ROME TO CONSIDER NIGER'S CRITICAL NEED FOR

FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE TRUCKS FOR INTERNAL FOOD DISTRIBUTION.

A. AS NIAMEY'S LATEST STATUS REPORT INDICATED (NIAMEY 1936), GENERAL PICTURE CONCERNING MOVEMENT OF GRAIN TO, THROUGH AND FROM PORTS INLAND TO NIGER IS ENCOURAGING. FOOD GRAINS ARE MOVING AND MOST OF BOTTLENECKS, ESPECIALLY AT PARAKOU, ARE BEING OVERCOME. MAJOR SHORT SPOT CONTINUES TO BE DISTRIBUTION CENTERS WITHIN NIGER. IMPROVED TRANSPORT TO NIGER HAS INEVITABLY ACCENTUATED INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION PROBLEM.

B. FOOD IS ALSO MOVING INLAND FROM THESE DISTRIBUTION CENTERS AT PREFET AND SUB-PREFET LEVEL ON DAY TO DAY BASIS, BUT THERE ARE NOT REPEAT NO RESERVES OR STOCKPILING INLAND. ASSURED DAILY SUPPLY OUT OF THESE CENTERS IS THEREFORE VITAL.

C. SOFTEST SPOTS IN THIS PICTURE ARE AREAS GENERALLY TO THE NORTH OF TAHOUA, DAKORO, MADAOUA AND MAINESOROA. TERRAIN IS ROUGH, ROADS VIRTUALLY NONEXISTENT, AND GENERALLY IMPASSABLE WITHOUT FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE. RAINS FURTHER ACCENTUATE PROBLEM EVEN WITH FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE AND RELEVANT TO NOTE RAINS HAVE STARTED. RAINS ARE UNEVEN BUT SOME OF ABOVE AREAS HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED PRECIPITATION.

D. WE ESTIMATE CURRENT IN-COUNTRY FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE RESOURCES AT SOME 70 TRUCKS. THIS INCLUDE 13 BELGIAN TRUCKS OPERATING OUT OF TAHOUA AND RANGING OVER WIDE AREA AS FAR NORTH AS MALI BORDER AND COVERING SOME OF MOST NEEDY RELIEF CAMPS IN TCHIN-TABARADAN/ABALAK TRIANGLE, AND 11 GERMAN TRUCKS JUST ARRIVED IN COTONOU. AS BEST AS WE CAN DETERMINE, AT LEAST 30 ADDITIONAL 2 1/2 TON TRUCKS OR 15 TO 18 FIVE TON TRUCKS ARE REQUIRED DURING RAINY SEASON TO SERVE INLAND AREAS AND RELIEF CAMPS ACROSS WIDE ARC FROM NIAMEY TO N'GUIGMI.

E. OUR CONSIDERED JUDGMENT IS THAT NEW GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE TO DATE IN MOVING GRAIN, IMPROVING TRANSPORT SITUATION, REDUCING CORRUPTION AND OVERCOMING BUREAUCRATIC LETHARGY, ESPECIALLY AT LOCAL LEVELS, IS GOOD AND SUPERIOR TO RECORD OF PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT. CHIEF OF STATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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KOUNTCHE HAS MADE EQUITABLE AND EFFICIENT FOOD DISTRIBUTION FIRST PRIORITY OF NEW GOVERNMENT AND WE SATISFIED GON IS OPERATING UP TO LIMIT OF ITS CAPACITY AND BETTER THAN ANYONE EXPECTED. IN MOST PREFETS, LOCAL OFFICIALS ARE BACKSTOPPED AND SUPERVISED BY MILITARY OFFICERS TO HELP INSURE JOB GETS DONE. PROBLEM REMAINS OF GETTING AHEAD OF DAILY REQUIREMENTS, STOCKPILING AND MOVING FOODSTUFFS OUT TO CAMPS.

F. WHERE GON'S PERFORMANCE IS LESS IMPRESSIVE IS IN HANDLING OF DONORS, AS ILLUSTRATED BY PROBLEMS IT CREATED WITH DUTCH AND CANADIANS. THIS HAS APPARENTLY LED SOME PEOPLE, INCLUDING POSSIBLY BELGIANS, TO QUESTION GON NEED. THIS PROBLEM NEEDS TO BE PUT INTO BETTER FOCUS. AS THIS ISSUE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY COME UP IN ROME, WE URGE US REPS TO REBU IT BECAUSE BELGIAN SITUATION IN NO WAY COMPARABLE TO DUTCH TURNDOWN. BELIGANS ARRIVED HERE UNDER PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT, WHICH PERMITTED BELGIAN MILITARY DRIVE THEIR OWN TRUCKS. NEW REGIME DECIDED NOT REVERSE COMMITMENTS OF DIORI'S GOVERNMENT. BOTH DUTCH AND CANADIANS ARRIVED AFTER NEW GOVERNMENT IN POWER WITH DIFFERENT CONCEPT OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TO ITS OWN PEOPLE AND TO DROUGHT RELIEF OPERATIONS. ITS VIEW WAS HAT NIGER SHOULD AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE STAND ON ITS OWN FEET AND THAT FOREIGN HELP WAS NECESSARY AND WELCOME IN CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT WIHINT LIMIT OF NIGER'S SLENDER RESOURCES, RELIEF OPERATIONS SHOULD BE IN HANDS OF NIGERIENS, NOT FOREIGNERS. WE BELIEVE GON SHOULD BE COMMENDED FOR THIS VIEW AND NOT PENALIZED. UNFORTUNATELY, GON HAS NOT BEEN ADEP IN ARTICULARTING THESE POLICIES AND IS HANDLING OF DUTCH AND CANADIAN OFFERS WAS LAMENTABLE. REVERSE OF COIN IS THAT NEITHER CUTCN NOR CANADIANS DID MUCH TO EXPLAIN THEIR CASE; AND FURTHER THAT DUTCH PROPOSAL WAS POORLY THOUGHT THROUGH AND PUT TO GON RATHER ARROGANTLY ON TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT BASIS; WHILE CANADIANS GAVE IMPRESSION THAT TRUCKS WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY SMALL ARMY OF CRIVERS AND SPECIALISTS WHICH TURNED OF HIS INEXPERIENCED BUT PROUD NEW REGIME.

G. AFTER SOME FUMBLING, AND AS RESULT OF OUR PRODDING, GON HAS SPELLED OUT ITS POLICY ON MILITARY TRANSPORT AS SET LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FORTH IN ITS NOTE TO EMBASSY (PARA TWO NIAMEY 1795). THESE ARE REASONABLE GROUND RULES WHICH REFLECT HIGH LEVEL GON DECISION AND THEY SHOULD FORM BASIS OF DISCUSSION AT ROME MEETING, NOT DUTCH OR CANADIAN EXPERIENCE. IN FACT, INSTEAD OF AGONIZING OVER DUTCH AND CANADIAN SNAFU IT WOULD BE BETTER TO RECALL CASE OF BRITISH TRUCKS, TOTALLING ABOUT 30, WHICH CONFORMED TO GON GUIDELINES AND WHICH ARE BEING PUT TO GOOD USE.

H. FINALLY RE PARA 2(B) OF ROME 8105, IF BY NIGER INPUT IS MEANT VIGOROUS NIGERIEN PRESENTATION AT ROME, WE DOUBT THIS WILL BE FORTHCOMING. WE ARE NOT AWARE ANYONE HAS KEPT GON FULLY ALERTED TO ROME MEETING, EXCEPT FOR OUR INITIATIVE (PARA 4, NIAMEY 1856). WE HOPE, THEREFORE, US REPS WILL SPEAK OUT ALONG FOREGOING

LINES AND TAKE UP SNY SLACK. IF NIGER INPUT REFERS TO
LOCAL RECEPTION OF MILITARY OR OTHER TRANSPORT AS
THEY ARRIVE, THIS CAN BE ASSURED, PROVIDED DONORS STICK TO
GON FUIDELINES. THEY WILL BE PUT TO GOOD USE AND MAY
JUST MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH
OUT THERE.

2. BY SEPTTEL, WE ARE SUGGESTING THAT RDO BARON PARTICIPATE
IN ROME MEETING.
HECK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRUCKS, DISASTER RELIEF, CARGO HANDLING, DROUGHTS, FOODS, HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974NIAMEY01950
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740155-0522
From: NIAMEY
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740644/aaaablr.tel
Line Count: 179
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AID
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A. NIAMEY 1936; B. NIAMEY 1795 C. RO, ME 8105 D. NIAMEY 1856
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 APR 2002 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <17 JUN 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NIGER DROUGHT RELIEF - ROME MEETING
TAGS: EAID, NG
To: ROME
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005